

Lister Sinclair

Good evening. I'm Lister Sinclair and this is *Ideas* about education. "Suffering from low morale, depressed, feeling unfairly blamed for the ills of society? You must be a teacher." So began an article in the educational supplement of The London Times last year. An accompanying editorial went on to say that "the nation's leaders claim to put education at the top of the agenda, but they leave teachers at the bottom." A lot of Canadian teachers feel the same way. Everyone wants to fix education, but no one seems to want to include teachers in the solution. Teachers are our subject tonight on *Ideas*, as we continue with David Cayley's series, "The Education Debates." We'll tell one teacher's story and then look at the impact school reform has had on teachers generally. Finally, we'll consider the impact teachers might have on school reform, if only they were given the chance. "The Education Debates," Part 3, by David Cayley.

David Cayley

Those who have listened to the first two programs of this series have heard several school reformers denounce progressive education. Progressivism, roughly speaking, is the opinion that the needs, aptitudes and interests of the individual child should dictate the shape and pace of that child's education. Reformers say that this approach has fostered incompetence and inequality. But many teachers continue to uphold the ideas the reformers scorn. I'll begin tonight with one such teacher, someone who deplores the pretense of objectivity in testing, who favours free movement and individualized instruction in the classroom, who values the exercise of intelligence more highly than the production of correct answers and who still honours the progressive philosophy that sees growth, experimentation and the child's active construction of knowledge as the heart of education. The teacher is Alex Lawson and during the first part of the program she'll look back at the Toronto alternative school where she was able to put this philosophy into practice. Then she'll reflect about the changes that have happened since. The story begins with her own remembered experience of school. It was there, she thinks now, that her views on teaching first began to form.

Alex Lawson

To me, it was like going to church. The question was, how could you pass the day in your mind because there was certainly nothing interesting going on in the classroom for me at that point. The teacher would stand at the front and then within moments I would lose interest. I had developed a fairly interesting interior life, but it's hard to carry on for hours at a time. And I can just remember being almost in tears waiting for that four o'clock bell, waiting for that freedom. At least in church I could read the Bible, I could read something. But in school at that time, you could not read while the teacher was talking and you had to do what you had to do, which was often just reading little passages here and there. Each of your classmates would also read their one paragraph. And that was reading. And math was algorithms. Oh, it was horrible.

David Cayley

The number of kids who feel this way about school is sometimes forgotten by those who advocate a more rigorous curriculum and who expect it to produce more biddable children and greater social equality. Alex Lawson never forgot. She worked with kids outside schools for eight years, she says, before she was finally willing to try teaching. And when she did, in front of 38 grade 7 and 8 students at a Toronto elementary school, she found herself doing or less what had been done to her. She uses mathematics, her special love, as an example.

Alex Lawson

In mathematics, at that point, I knew that to tell the kids to open the book and to do page 20 would be

as horrible for them as it had been for me and I wanted to do something different, but my colleagues in the school said, well, it's just too much to do anything different and don't bother trying. And eventually I didn't try. I couldn't. I couldn't figure out how to do it at that time and so I would have the kids open a book that they didn't understand, many of them, and they would look back at me with blank faces and I just felt horrible. I mean, everything I said I would not do I was doing it, at that point. It was about control, it was about discipline and it was about minimal learning. So I realized that I was not going to inflict this upon them and I left.

David Cayley

Lawson took a job as the director of a day care whose operations were meshed with an adjoining school. The school was called Alternative Primary School and it made a striking contrast to the one she had just left.

Alex Lawson

I got to see education the way I'd never seen it before and it was the embodiment of my dreams. Here was a place where kids were excited about learning and where things were being tried out and where there was pedagogical discussion happening all the time. I was just thrilled. I realized that there was a place to do the things that I wanted to do.

David Cayley

Particularly impressive to her were the methods of the grade 5 and 6 teacher, John Dunlop, who was then working with an approach called the contract system.

Alex Lawson

Kids were given a contract for four or five weeks and basically it outlined everything they were responsible for and they could then set out to undertake it at different times. Rather than him directing from the front, they would go off and work on whatever area they were interested in at the time. They had to do it all, but they set their agenda, they planned their time, they were responsible for getting it done. And that was the system I eventually adopted.

David Cayley

The opportunity to employ this method herself came when she was hired to teach at an alternative primary school called Cherrywood in the Borough of York. The school had been started several years before she came by a small group of parents eager to create a convivial school. After much discussion, they had come to agree on certain principles. Parents were to be involved in the classroom and exercise authority in the school, but the teachers were to be paramount on pedagogical questions. There were to be close links with the community, including regular community service. And the children's academic programs were to be individualized. Alex Lawson took grades 4 and 5 and put the contract system into effect.

Alex Lawson

I wanted them to take responsibility, rather than me being constantly in charge and telling them what to do. I wanted them to learn how to plan their own time and to suffer through as they learned, rather than learning it, as I did, in university. I felt that actually not enough is asked of children of eleven and twelve. They're quite capable of that and they did prove themselves to be. I also wanted to give them the freedom to do some of the things that they were keen on. So the classroom looked entirely different, if you came in. It was an evolution. But, a few years into it, a day in the classroom would be that we would start with a morning run. I really believe that physical exercise

ought to be a big part of school, so they actually had gym twice a day. Like it or lump it, they did. That was my authoritarian self. So we ran every morning. And actually that evolved into half the school running every morning. All the junior kids ran.

And then during the first half-hour or 40 minutes of every day, we would be discussing either current events or whatever topic had come up that we could somehow critically analyse, and really think about. I would ask who it affected, and try and look at it from different points of view to really teach them critical analysis and to allow them to develop a voice, even if it wasn't a voice I always wanted to hear and I might have some difficulty with it, but I wanted them to experiment with that, because that's the nature of that age. And then, after that, they would go off and work on whatever they had planned out for their day.

So if you came into the classroom, what might you see? I think the first thing you would notice was that I wasn't at the front. You might not even be able to find me. I'd be off in a corner with one group of kids working on something, and the rest of the kids would be engaged in whatever they had decided upon. I think the second thing you would see was that often there would be adults, as many as I could rope in, in the classroom. Some of them would be parents. Others would be just whomever I had managed to get into the classroom. And then the third thing would be that there often would be little kids. My neighbouring teacher, the grade 1 - 2 teacher, and I had kids in each other's classes as much as possible. So in amongst my ten- and twelve-year-olds, you would see those six- and seven-year-olds, who I loved having in there. Sometimes they were the ones that got turfed out of their room for being a pain in the butt and they would come over and work in my room. Other times they'd come over to visit with their buddies or their siblings to get help on something. So there was a constant flow of ages, which I really wanted, which we all wanted. We worked as a team, the staff did. So there was a flow throughout the whole area. It was an open concept. There were kids everywhere.

David Cayley

Now, according to the parody, which I have frequently read, of this kind of classroom, it will have been intolerably noisy...

Alex Lawson

It was noisy, yeah.

Davie Cayley

Obviously not intolerably.

Alex Lawson

No. I mean, we had 90 kids in an open pod. That's a lot of kids. And they were all talking about different things, so rather than just me and 30 kids listening to me, there might be ten, 15 conversations going on. And we worked on the noise, believe me, we worked on the noise. It would have interfered and did interfere with a few kids. A few kids built themselves these little cubicles and these little forts at one point to try and barricade themselves off, to give themselves some quiet. There were times in the day — we all had the same reading time, so for 50 minutes every day, you could hear a pin drop. There were 90 kids reading. They were either reading, or they were beside their book and silent until they started reading. It's hard to waste 50 minutes, which is why we had it for so long. So they would eventually read, regardless.

David Cayley

So the noise was a necessary evil, as far as you were concerned. You tried to negotiate.

Alex Lawson

We tried. And as teachers, we would plan our time. Part of the situation there was that we were a team, we were hired to work together. We had planning meetings every week. So we would say, oh God, it's getting so noisy in here, we've got to do something. And we'd sit down and try and sort it out. And we'd sort it out with the kids. It was, how do we learn to live together in this situation? So it was a point of discussion and it was process and it was part of learning to live together, because part of the ethos of the place was that it was a community. It was developed by the parents, rather than the teachers. It was developed as a community.

David Cayley

What happened to the kids as a result of your being able to create a situation of this kind?

Alex Lawson

I think a number of things happened. Part of the reason I was so drawn to it was because of what it did for the kids on the outer edges. A child might be on what I would see as the outer edge either because they had some learning disabilities, or they were wired for sound and had difficulty sitting the amount of time they had to sit in a regular classroom, or they had other interests. They shared my experience of wanting to try other things on which I was keen and finding schooling boring. So they were kids on the outer edges for a whole pile of different reasons, and for those kids, Cherrywood was a way that they could be in the system and still flourish. Now, they didn't all flourish. There were some who needed a very structured situation, and Cherrywood was not that. The contracts were actually quite highly structured, but there was the noise and I think there is a group of kids who do need direct instruction, who do have a distinct sort of disability, either in reading and writing or mathematics, and they do need a different situation than what we had to offer. But that's a tiny group. And for the rest of them, most of them learn how to plan their own time. That was the No. 1 thing. Last night, as I was thinking about this, I was reading through some of the yearbook things that the kids put together upon graduation. And for most of them, the most pivotal experience was completing their first contract, learning how to manage their time, being responsible for themselves. This was fantastic. And having that responsibility, they loved and, indeed, they missed it when they went to grade 7. They found that a bit of a difficult transition.

David Cayley

What about the little kids like I would have been, the little proto-intellectuals, readers and so on?

Alex Lawson

You would have been in heaven. It was actually quite academic, I would say, in that every contract made the kids responsible for developing a research project on a theme that we had decided upon, and they had to put together a well-written project in which they had done research. They'd read a number of books, and they had developed their own ideas and constructed their own thinking on whatever topic it was. They were to include their own ideas, but they were also to bolster them with what they had read. And that was actually quite demanding. It wasn't enough for them to say, well, I think this or I think that. They were always asked to substantiate their thoughts, whether it was on paper or verbally. So if you were academically inclined, it was a garden.

David Cayley

The vibrancy of the academic program at Cherrywood is worth pausing over for a moment. Reform discourses are often hinged on an absolute opposition between child-centred methods and academic achievement. The real situation, in my experience, is a good deal more complicated than such simple dichotomies can comprehend. The system of individual contracts, for example, provides both accountability and self-direction — elements supposed to be on opposite sides of this great divide. Through the use of such methods, Cherrywood came to be seen as a model, both of parent involvement and of successful child-centred instruction. Visitors from around Ontario and farther afield were frequent and the school was used as a preferred placement for teachers-in-training by the local faculties of education.

Success, however, proved to be a mixed blessing. Cherrywood's popularity with middle class parents led to charges of elitism and strained relations with the regular school in whose building Cherrywood was housed. The York Board of Education resolved the resulting controversy by merging the two schools. Alex Lawson taught for a year in the new school and then took academic leave.

Alex Lawson

I had a really hard time with its demise. Not just because it had not been supported, but because of the things I was then asked to do in the classroom, things which I had quit over the first time. I was now being asked to do things like give graded report cards, which were anathema to me. And enormous amounts of testing, which have come in. I fundamentally disagree with this as a reasonable pedagogical tool. I don't believe that it is. So because of those sorts of things, I have gone the academic route. Teaching is my first love, but not in a way that I have to do things to children that I think are not in their best interest.

David Cayley

Alex Lawson is now completing a doctorate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Meanwhile, the Ontario government has brought in an ambitious program of school reform. The key element in this program, in Lawson's view, is the introduction of province-wide testing, initially of grade 3 students. She thinks that it represents an attempt to return education to an imagined past in which teaching and learning were straight-forward, easily-measured operations.

Alex Lawson

The reasoning behind that is that if we bring these tests in, all of a sudden teachers will learn to teach better and their children will do better just by virtue of bringing in these tests. It's such spurious reasoning. I mean, there's nothing in the literature on how to reform schools that suggests that testing will improve, genuinely improve, learning in children. It will superficially improve things because teachers will teach to the tests, but it doesn't genuinely improve things. The government would like it to be that straight-forward and simple. You tell them to do this, you test them on it and it will be done. It just doesn't recognize the reality of the situation and the complexity of learning. And they would like learning to be much more simple, I would say they have a behaviourist notion of what learning is: you do it, you drill it and it will happen. And if your viewpoint is that children actually learn by constructing knowledge, if you have a constructivist belief about how real learning takes place, one flies in the face of the other.

David Cayley

Lawson also thinks that province-wide testing is likely to lead to a polarization of the education

system. She says it's not the tests themselves that are the problem. She generally commends the province's Education Quality Assessment Office for the kinds of performance-based tests they've devised. Nor would it be that worrying to her if the provincial Ministry of Education were just trying to find out whether the schools are accomplishing the goals set for them. The problem comes, she says, when the results are published and newspapers start to carry lists of schools, ranked according to a simplified version of their students' results. She fears that this will foster competition between schools and encourage parents to pursue only the good of their own children, a future she feels is clearly visible in places like England that have already reformed education in this way.

Alex Lawson

The research that I've read now about what's happening there is that making schools' test results available to parents has led parents to try to send their children to those schools that have good results. Their involvement has been solely around their own children and their own children's needs, rather than the broader community. It's become a much more individualized effort on the part of parents, doing something for their kid, but not for the wider system because of the way it's structured around essentially shopping for schools and using the test results as a means to shop. The parent is positioned as a client and the schools are something to be shopped for. That's my fear.

David Cayley

More external testing has been one of the hallmarks of school reform throughout the English-speaking world. The result, for better or worse, depending on your point of view, has been the more competitive school system that Alex Lawson fears. There has also been a marked effect on the confidence and morale of teachers. External tests, amongst other things, are substitutes for a teacher's judgement about what should be taught, when it should be taught and how the students' progress should be evaluated. The tests say, in effect, do what you're told and stick to the curriculum. One can question the extent to which teachers have ever been professionals in the sense of being able to set their own standards, but certainly they are now losing whatever elements of professionalism they once had. The external examiner symbolizes this loss. Daniel Ferri is a teacher in the state of Illinois, which puts its grade 6 students through two weeks of standardized tests every March. These tests have been going on since 1985, two years before Daniel Ferri began teaching. Ferri is also a sometime broadcaster on Chicago's WBEZ, a national public radio station. This year, when March rolled around, he broadcast the following commentary, which I think says something both about standardized testing and about the situation of the teacher in a standardized regime. We repeat the broadcast, with his permission.

Daniel Ferri

This March, I, like thousands of other Sixth Grade teachers across the state of Illinois, stood in front of my classroom and tore the plastic from a stack of papers on which were printed the topic my students and dozens of thousands of other Sixth Graders would spend the next 40 minutes writing about. The students, the teachers and the schools are all graded on the results. We took the Illinois Goal Assessment Tests, the IGAPs. It's a state law that all across the state students will write about the same topic, take the same test, follow the same rules, so that everyone, everything is the same. It's a law because the easiest way for politicians to pretend they care about education is to stand up and declare that students are not learning because teachers can't teach and that schools are rotten and that we're going to fix it by taking a test. Not that those politicians have any idea what we would test for or how we would test for that, even if we knew. But it does not matter. It sounds

good on TV.

So the Illinois State Legislature told our state bureaucrats to design tests in reading, writing, math, science and social studies and to make everyone take them. We all took the IGAPs for two weeks in March so that everything, everyone, would be the same. Almost. Illinois students now learn to write by the numbers. The first paragraph of a paper must do this and this and this and this, and the three main body paragraphs must do that and that and that and that, and the conclusion paragraph must begin with two “this’s” followed by three “that’s” and end with an exciting “this.” Now, I’m not making this up or that. It’s that bad. And those are just the rules for a persuasive-type paper. We learn different rules for writing expository and narrative papers. This is not how people write. This is how people fill out tax forms.

Then we have the reading test, then the math test, then Cazimir Pulaski Day and then Oh, God Help Us. The kids hate it. The best writers especially hate it. ‘Mr. Ferri, haven’t you ever heard of foreshadowing? If I want to tell my story a different way, why can’t I?’ I explain that our State Legislature has determined that we must have standards of instruction. The children looked at me like I needed to blow my nose. I told them about basics of form that once mastered can be improvised on. They kept looking at me. I tried to convince them that these are efficient formulas for clear writing. They kept looking at me. Finally, I said, look, neither of us has any choice here. You have to take these tests and I have to give them and some poor soul in North Carolina has got to read and grade 500 of them a day. They have a list of rules, the rules you learn for writing each kind of essay, in front of them. If you don’t follow a rule, they take points from your score. They don’t care what you write. They only care about the rules. If you don’t follow the rules, you get a bad score. The scores are published in the paper. If our scores aren’t good, then people won’t think our schools are good and they won’t want to move here, which will make the real estate people mad. And they will yell at the school board, who will yell at the superintendent, who will yell at the principal, who will yell at me. This is not about writing. This is about not getting yelled at. This they understood.

Each student receives an IGAP test booklet. Its front page is for student information. The students must record their name, grade, student ID number, date of birth, ethnicity and God knows what else on it. Each letter or number goes in a box. Then under the box in #2 pencil the student must fill in a circle that corresponds to that letter or number or ethnicity. The page looks as if a loan application and an optical illusion had a baby. If the boxes and circles aren’t filled out right or the marks aren’t dark enough, the machines can’t read them and we get yelled at.

We filled out the information pages on the day before we began the tests. After the students were finished filling them out, the pages looked like they’d been used to line birdcages. There were random marks everywhere. So my teaching partner and I stuck post-it notes on the worst of them, saying “Print your name more clearly — “fill in circles under date of birth” or “darken circles.”

The morning we gave the first writing test my students sat vacant and resigned, like Pickett’s Virginians, waiting for the charge. I picked up the packet of prompt pages. The writing topic is printed on them and they are sealed in plastic for secrecy. I ripped the plastic and we handed them out, then we handed out the students’ test packets, some sporting post-it reminders to print your name or darken circles. Then I stood in front of the class and read from my booklet, which, by law, were the same exact words thousands of other sixth grade teachers would also be reading that morning: “This is the test I told you about. You will have 40 minutes to...” — blah-blah-blah-blah —

ending with, "Turn over the prompt page, read what the topic is and begin writing. Good luck." I was not bound by state law to say Good luck, but I thought it might be okay to wing it there. The topic was "Should students be required to wear uniforms to school?" The children picked up their pencils, took a breath and wrote. The only sound was the turning of pages, the scratching and sharpening of pencils. As required by law, I announced when 20 minutes were left in the test, then five, then when time was up. We collected the prompt pages because they must be counted and sent back to the state.

We collected the test packets and I sat them on my desk while the students stretched and talked quietly. Then I heard Duane ask Becky, "What did you write about?" "Well, I wrote about uniforms. We all did. It said to do that on the paper." "Mine didn't say that. Mine said to write about dancin' circles." Becky and I both said, "What? What did you write about?" "I wrote about dancin' circles. Here, I'll show you." I reached for the pile of prompt pages, but Duane was already rummaging through the stack of test booklets. He said, "Naw, it's not over there. It's on these." Becky said, "Those didn't say what to write about." "Mine did." Duane pulled his test booklet out of the stack and pointed to the post-it I had stuck to the front page. On that post-it I'd written "darken circles." "See? Right here. It says dancin' circles. And so that's what I wrote about."

That morning, thousands of sixth graders across the state of Illinois sat at their desks. They curled themselves around their pencils, stuck their tongues between their teeth and wrote five-paragraph essays about wearing uniforms. All except one. His essay began, "Well, I never thought much about dancin' circles before today, but if that's what you want to know about, well, here goes." And somewhere in North Carolina, some poor soul will reach into the stack of 500 essays they will read that day. Four hundred ninety-nine of them will be about wearing uniforms and one won't. I would love to watch her face when she reads it. There may still be hope.



David Cayley

The current wave of school reform began to take shape nearly 20 years ago, though it is only now cresting in certain parts of Canada. With some local exceptions, teachers have not been consulted about the changes that have taken place. They have been treated as the objects of school reform, when they haven't been seen as its enemies. In Ontario, one activist told me that she had urged on the Harris government the view that reform would never succeed unless the government had the gumption, in her words, "to take on the teachers", which presently they did. Andy Hargreaves is a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the Director of the Institute's International Centre for School Change. He has spent much of his career studying and writing about the work of teachers and he thinks that "taking on the teachers" is a futile and misguided approach to educational reform. He thinks the way to improve education is by expanding the professional competence of teachers and by appealing to the idealism that draws people to teaching in the first place. It was in such a spirit, he says, that he began as a teacher himself.

Andy Hargreaves

For me, it was an act of repair. I went to a rather stuffy English boy's grammar school and they sent me a questionnaire at the end of university saying, what were my intentions for my future career? Somewhat arrogantly I said I planned to go into teaching and then to train a better generation of teachers than the ones who appeared to have taught me. And that's, actually, one reason why many people go into teaching. It is an act of repair, of restoration, of contributing to a better teaching

community.

David Cayley

After beginning as an elementary school teacher, Andy Hargreaves took what Alex Lawson earlier called the “academic route.” In recent years, he has studied the way school reform has unfolded in places that began reforming their school systems before Canada, like England, New Zealand and Australia. In these countries, he says, the process of reform has been driven by popular anxieties, both about economic conditions and about social morale. Reforming schools has been seen as a way of restoring social discipline and getting a grip on economic change. England, since the election of Margaret Thatcher, has been the most radical case.

Andy Hargreaves

England moved very rapidly towards a market system that was driven by a new conservatism where the belief was that children, but particularly their parents, were consumers and clients who would choose their schools on the open market. There was also a belief that there would be ways of describing for public consumption how well those schools were doing in relation to each other so that parents could make those informed choices. The idea was that the market, in that sense, should run relatively free and that those schools that did well would attract many students and would prosper and expand and survive and those schools that did not do well would not attract many students and they would shrink and decline and close. It was a Darwinian model of the survival of the fittest in an open market. Alongside that new conservatism, oddly, was an old conservatism which was about the protection of national values, national culture, national heritage, traditional subjects. So you found in England a national curriculum very detailed, very centrally controlled, where history was largely British history, literature was largely British literature. The results of that have been interesting and largely negative, I think, according to the research. There is no evidence that the learning gaps between wealthy parents and poor parents, between middle class families and lower class families and their children have in any way closed because of the establishment of this market system.

There is, at the same time, a lot of evidence that the effects on teachers have been catastrophic in terms of stress, morale. There are now shortages of teachers in almost every subject in the secondary school curriculum in England because demoralization within the profession runs that high.

One of the major sources of recruitment that there's always been to teaching, which is the sons and daughters of teachers, has almost dried up because teachers have been telling their own children that teaching is not a worthwhile career to go into because they feel so controlled, so constrained, so overloaded and so on. And there is also a lot of evidence that there's a widening gap between teachers and administrators, that actually administrators, school principals and so on, are receiving more professional development than they did ten years ago and teachers themselves are receiving less professional development, less opportunities to get better at the craft that will help students than they did ten years ago. And last but not least, what has begun to come out in England but also in other countries, like Australia and New Zealand, is evidence of mounting indiscipline in schools, increasing rates of suspensions and exclusions from school. That's partly a result of the market. In other words, you're more likely to attract other parents if you keep the bad kids out of school than if you keep them in. So it encourages you to suspend, to exclude, to expel, to transfer them to other schools so that your image will remain the same. But it's also a result of a very high-pressured academic climate which is all about cognitive intelligence and not at all about the things that make children feel comfortable in school, which is that what they do has meaning for them, matters to them and so on. So these are some of the kinds of patterns that have taken place within England.

David Cayley

These changes, in England and elsewhere, have often been presented as a restoration, a return to the tried and true after a period of romantic excess. Those good old days are largely imaginary, in Hargreaves' view, but the promise of returning to them is politically popular. This puts a persistent difficulty in the way of teacher-friendly school reform. What plays in politics and what works in schools, Hargreaves says, are two entirely different things.

Andy Hargreaves

In times of political panic, governments move towards control strategies rather than what we might call capacity-building strategies. Capacity-building strategies involve developing the skills and the abilities and the knowledge in people to be able to operate more effectively in their organization, which in this case is a school. Control strategies are predicated on the assumption that the reason our schools are failing is because teachers have been incompetent or they've been lazy or they've been stupid and therefore what the reforms need to do is attend to those deficits and control teachers into operating in a different way. Governments operate off short-term frames of electability. They operate off about three or four year cycles of reform because they believe they may only have one shot at the target, whereas educational reform cycles are much longer. For something to really make a difference in classrooms, teachers have to engage with it, understand it, practice it and make it effective, and that takes at least seven or eight to ten years before you see a positive impact of the reform taking effect within the classroom. So in terms of what really works, change strategies in education don't at all correspond with reform cycles in the political sphere.

David Cayley

Because politics is out of phase with what has proven effective at the school and classroom level, reform of the type Hargreaves favours begins with a handicap. Nevertheless, he believes there are schools that are changing for the better and that this successful adaptation is following a few critically important principles. The first is that schools must be accessible to their communities. The era of the fortress school with its bureaucratic, please-report-to-the-office mentality is over. The second key principle is that schools must treat their students as whole persons and not as units of academic production. The key to progress in this respect, he thinks, lies in breaking down certain entrenched dichotomies. At the moment, academic rigour and studies more relevant to the students' experience and concerns are seen as exclusive alternatives. One either teaches to the intellect or teaches to the emotions, not both. But there need be no contradiction, Hargreaves says, between supporting students and making demands on their minds.

Andy Hargreaves

Many students feel emotionally disengaged from high school. In several studies of drop-outs that we looked at, when drop-out students were asked what would have been the one thing that would have kept you on in school, the answer that they gave was not higher expectations, not clearer learning targets, not a better school development plan. They said, what would have kept me here is the feeling that there is one adult here who knows me and cares for me and that that would make a difference. And we know from all the research on resilience, which is the ability of students to bounce back against severe hardships that they suffer in their life from their family, from their community, from poverty, from alcoholism and so on, that what makes a difference to them is one adult connection in their lives who is a role model for them, who is somebody they can take their concerns to, bounce things off and so on. And high schools have been bereft of this, in large ways, not because teachers don't care, but because the whole structure of high school, based on subjects, disciplines, a kind of 1950s-60s nostalgic view of how good high schools should be, has squeezed

out the ability of teachers to connect emotionally as well as intellectually with their students because they simply have too many students to teach. And so kids fall between the cracks. They lose interest; they become disengaged. And therefore, the high school especially has to pay attention to emotional as well as intellectual learning, to put the two together. And that's done through good relationships with teachers and through a curriculum which engages with students' lives at various points, which engages with their future work lives, which engages with their families and communities, which engages with the social and political and environmental world around them, about which research, again, shows they care very, very deeply at this point in their development. And that can be combined with very high standards, very demanding curricula and it doesn't have to be done instead of meeting those particular objectives.

David Cayley

Accommodating students as whole persons requires that they be known by teachers, as Hargreaves has said. And this demands, in turn, that teachers have the time and the necessary support and encouragement to be able to respond to students in this way. Lots of things now stand in the way of closer relations between students and teachers — the large size of many schools, the way the school day is organized, the shortage of time. But the most critical obstacle, in Hargreaves' estimation, is persistent misinterpretation of the interests and motives of teachers. Teachers are seen as the enemies of school change when they ought to be seen as its agents.

Andy Hargreaves

In order for schools to be good places for children to be, places where children can learn, they have to be good places for teachers to be, places where teachers can learn. In order to teach better, teachers have to have the means to know how to teach better over time. Now, one way we often approach this is by short, in-service workshop sessions or professional development days. Some governments in some provinces in this country have tried to front load some of that in-service training into the school holidays before school starts. The evidence is that when professional development is dealt with in an isolated way, if you're taught a new mathematics curriculum, or you're taught how to handle a new software program way ahead of when you're actually going to sit down with the kids and do it, the evidence is the learning doesn't transfer. The learning only really transfers if you have ways of talking to other teachers about your work and getting support from other teachers about your work and getting ideas and inputs from other colleagues and from consultants in the system while you're actually engaged with kids, on the same day you're engaged with kids or the same week you're engaged with kids. Building this kind of professional community in a school requires teachers to talk about teaching together and share good ideas about teaching together and acquire new ideas from the outside and bring them into their schools. This will not happen by spontaneous combustion, just by itself. It needs certain kinds of supports to make that possible. One of them is time. Now, we're seeing in the province of Ontario that time is something that's just been taken away from teachers within the school day. But I've actually researched how teachers spend their preparation time and the evidence is that if the school leadership has a focus on getting teachers to talk together about teaching, then the provision of time within the school day can make a huge difference as to whether they are able to do that effectively. If they're always expected to add it on at the end of the day or do it in school vacations, it's the wrong time and it's less effective. Those are the times that they're running around trying to contact parents, connecting with kids, marking books and so on. So time within the school day really makes a difference for building that kind of professional community. Good quality leadership makes a difference for building that kind of professional community. This means leaders who see themselves not as managers, but as

conductors of what other people are doing; not leaders who keep their cards close to their chests, but leaders who are able to support their staff, to motivate them, to work alongside their staff, to model team leadership, as a principle within a school, so that the staff can work more effectively as a team and function together. So building a strong professional community means there's a set of Don'ts. It means not shaming teachers, not withdrawing resources, not building a general climate of demoralization which discourages teachers and increases stress for them, not making teachers handle a pace of change that is so fast that teachers can't cope with it. And it means a set of Do's. It means definitely expecting that teachers will work together as a community and not treat their classroom as a separate castle or kingdom into which no one else should intrude. For teachers of an older school, teaching was the second most private act that people performed in society and I think that has to change now. And another Do is it means providing, as well as the leadership and the encouragement and the expectation that teachers work as a community, it means providing the time and the resources for teachers to be able to work as a community.

David Cayley

If teachers are to become this kind of vibrant professional community, Hargreaves says, one of the things they will have to do is to reorient their unions away from bread and butter issues and towards the quality of education issues that concern the public. The public will not believe that teachers' resistance to change expresses devotion to the cause of public education rather than to their own perks, he goes on, unless teachers put forward a positive program for school change.

Andy Hargreaves

What the unions can do collectively and what some unions are doing in the United States, is to show not only that they are opposed to bad reforms, and many governmental reforms are appallingly bad reforms in how they're designed and how they're implemented and the pace at which they're implemented, but I think the real challenge to unions is to begin to show what kinds of changes they support, what kinds of changes that benefit students they want to promote, changes that not only advantage their members. So for example, lower class sizes in the primary years create more jobs for primary teachers, for elementary teachers. But I think the public would like to see the unions advocate changes that make demands on their members, that are difficult for their members, that require new learning on the part of their members. I think the public would like to see the unions more seriously taking up issues of teacher incompetence and teacher evaluation and there are some unions in the States that have done that very, very seriously by, for example, using peer assessment to evaluate teachers. So in Cincinnati, for example, with union support, the administrator no longer evaluates the teacher, usually by one observation once a year, because that's the only time they have to do it, but peers from other schools evaluate teacher competence, observe teachers. And paradoxically, what they've found because of this is that rates of removal from the profession have not decreased but they've actually increased because, given the opportunities, teachers are much more demanding of their colleagues as a community than many of the public think that they are from the outside.

David Cayley

Making teachers a true professional community, combining academic rigour with emotional relevance and making schools more open and more accountable to the surrounding community: these are the principles that Andy Hargreaves thinks ought to inform school change. But reform will not succeed, he says finally, without a willingness to radically alter the structure of the familiar, unwieldy industrial relics we call schools, particularly high schools.

Andy Hargreaves

What we really, really have to think about — and it's one of the most painful things for the public and schools to be able to take on — is the question of what we need to do to our high schools to make them welcoming and involving places for all students? Not just the academically capable, not just the future valedictorians, not just those who will have a place as jocks on the sports teams. But what can we do to make these places inclusive for all kids? What can we do to restructure the curriculum and the ways of organizing lessons that get beyond the format of one teacher, one discipline, one class? Kids move from class to class like they move between flights in an overcrowded airport, dragging their luggage from their lockers behind them as they go. The only difference between an overcrowded airport and some of our larger secondary schools is that airlines don't demand that you enjoy the flights when you're actually on them, which is something that schools and teachers sometimes do. I've shadowed grade 9 students going round from one lesson to the next, and you wouldn't believe the impossibly small fragments of time that they have to get from one end of the building to their locker to the other end of the building, and change frames from being in chemistry and having to hypothesize and investigate and document results very carefully to suddenly being creative with poetry in another lesson within about a three-minute time frame. We really need to think of ways of restructuring our high schools so that kids in the early years of high school, when they're most vulnerable to dropping out, feel that they're part of a community of other kids that follows the curriculum through together — a common curriculum — feels that there's a small number of teachers that they need to get to know, who will follow them through the year, so that the kids know each other, the kids know the teachers, the teachers know the kids, and the teachers know each other. But we've got to get the idea that if schools are going to be good places for students to be, they have to be good places for teachers to be. Teachers have to be seen as part of the solution to educational reform and not as part of the problem, or not only as part of the problem.